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# Aided Watergate cover-up, Nixon admits in memoirs

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In the first installment of former President Richard M. Nixon's memoirs, he admits he was a party to the Watergate cover-up in 1972 by ordering the CIA to call the FBI off the case.

Mr. Nixon places the blame for his fall from office on his repeatedly worrying about the wrong problem and on his seeing the Watergate affair as a "public relations problem that only needed a public relations solution."

The installment, published in the New York Times and other newspapers, also reveals that Mr. Nixon was more concerned about himself than about his two top aides, H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, when he asked them to resign in April of 1973.

Regarding his role in the cover-up, Mr. Nixon writes: "As Haldeman explained it, Gen. Vernon Walters, Deputy Director of the CIA, was to call Pat Gray, acting director of the FBI, and tell him to 'stay . . . out of . . . this business here. We don't want you to go any further on it.' The FBI and the CIA had a long-standing agreement not to interfere in each other's secret operations.

## No further investigation

"I told Haldeman to say that I believed this thing would open up the whole Bay of Pigs matter — and they should call the FBI in and say that for the sake of the country they should go no further in the case."

Several times, the former president alluded to his trying to deal with the "wrong problems."

After relating the discussion he had with White House counsel John Dean III, when the

two discussed E. Howard Hunt's alleged blackmail attempt, Mr. Nixon says, "In retrospect, it is clear that on March 21 John Dean was trying to alert me to the fact that what I had assumed for nine months was the major Watergate problem — the question of who authorized the break-in — had been overtaken by the new and far more serious problem of the cover-up."

Later, after Mr. Dean's detailed testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee, Mr. Nixon writes: "As soon as his testimony was over, I once again made the same mistake I had been making since the Watergate break-in: I was worried about the wrong problem. I went off on a tangent by concentrating all our attention and resources on trying to refute Dean. But it no longer made any difference that not all of Dean's testimony was accurate. It only mattered if any of Dean's testimony was accurate. And Dean's account of the crucial March 21 meeting was more accurate than my own. . . ."

## The firings

"In the end it would make less difference that I was not as involved as Dean had alleged than that I was not as uninvolved as I had claimed."

Regarding the resignations of Messrs. Haldeman and Ehrlichman, the former president says: "I was faced with having to fire my friends for things that I myself was part of."

"I was selfish enough about my own survival to want them to leave. But I was not so ruthless as to be able to confront easily the idea of hurting people I care about so deeply. I worried about the impact on them if they were forced to leave, but I worried more about the impact on me if they didn't."